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Knowledge on Gender Issues of Middle Level Administrators of State Universities in Samar Island: Design for Gender Sensitive Leadership Framework

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) related to gender sensitivity among academic leaders in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) across Samar Island to design a GAD-compliant academic leadership framework. It assessed administrators' knowledge (legal compliance, gender concepts, institutional responsibilities) , attitudes (valuing inclusivity, GAD compliance perception, support for gender-sensitive leadership, bias awareness) , and implementation of gender-sensitive practices (school management, infrastructure, pedagogical practices). The research used a descriptive-correlational design with a complete enumeration of academic administrators from four SUCs in Samar Island: University of Eastern Philippines (UEP), Northwest Samar State University (NWSSU), Samar State University (SSU), and Eastern Samar State University (ESSU). Findings showed high knowledge levels among both administrators and faculty, with administrators scoring higher. Attitudes were predominantly favorable , and practices were generally "practiced," though stronger in management and pedagogy than in infrastructure. Significant positive correlations were found between knowledge and attitudes, knowledge and pedagogical practices, and attitudes and gender-sensitive leadership practices, indicating that knowledge and attitudes predict practice. The study proposed the Transformative Gender-Sensitive Academic Leadership Theory and a GAD-Compliant Academic Leadership Framework, emphasizing legal literacy, inclusive values, and consistent implementation.

KEYWORDS: *gender sensitivity, academic leadership, GAD compliant leadership framework, knowledge, attitudes, and practices*

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INTRODUCTION

This section highlights the increasing pressure on Philippine SUCs to adapt to a changing educational landscape, requiring effective, inclusive, and gender-sensitive leadership from deans and campus directors. Republic Act No. 9710, the Magna Carta of Women, mandates gender-sensitive policies in government institutions, including SUCs, necessitating leaders to integrate gender equity principles into administrative practices. Gender-sensitive leadership is crucial for organizational success and fosters a conducive academic climate. Despite advances, traditional biases and gender stereotypes still influence higher education leadership, often limiting women's opportunities. There's variability in KAPs related to gender sensitivity among administrators, with gaps in consistent application of policies and formal GAD training. The study aims to assess gender sensitivity and personality traits of administrators in Samar Island SUCs, focusing on deans and campus directors' KAPs, and to propose a GAD-compliant framework.

Objectives of the Study:

The study aimed to examine the knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) related to gender sensitivity among school administrators in State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) in Samar Island specifically;

- Assess the level of knowledge of school administrators regarding gender-sensitive

practices, policies, and legal mandates in terms of Legal Compliance, Gender Concepts and Frameworks, and Institutional Responsibilities.

- Examine the attitudes of school administrators towards gender sensitivity in the academic environment in terms of Value of Gender Inclusivity, Perception of GAD Compliance, Support for Gender-Sensitive Leadership, and Bias and Stereotype Awareness.

Methodology:

- **Research Design:** Descriptive-correlational design was used to examine KAP and explore relationships among these variables.
- **Locale of the Study:** Samar Island, specifically the four comprehensive Higher Education Institutions: University of Eastern Philippines (UEP) in Catarman, Northwest Samar State University (NWSSU) in Calbayog, Samar State University (SSU) in Catbalogan, and Eastern Samar State University (ESSU) in Borongan.
- **Population and Sampling:** The population included 208 school administrators (SUC presidents, college deans, campus directors, and department chairs) and 422 faculty members. Complete enumeration was used for administrators, and Slovin's formula determined a sample of 328 faculty members using a two-stage sampling method (proportionate stratified and random sampling).
- **Respondents:** A total of 492 respondents participated, including 2 SUC presidents, 57 college deans and campus directors, 116 department chairs, and 317 faculty members.

Research Instruments:

- **Gender Sensitivity Knowledge Scale for School Administrators:** Newly developed, rooted in GAD guidelines and research, assessing knowledge of gender-sensitive practices, policies, and legal mandates.
- **Attitude Towards Gender Sensitivity Scale for School Administrators:** A 36-item tool measuring attitudes towards gender inclusivity, GAD compliance perception, support for gender-sensitive leadership, and bias/stereotype awareness using a 5-point Likert scale.
- **Gender-Sensitive Practices Scale for School Administrators:** A 30-item tool assessing the extent of gender-sensitive practices in school management, infrastructure/resource allocation, and pedagogical practices/student engagement, rated on a 5-point Likert scale.

- **Validation of the Instrument:** A two-step process: content validation by experts in gender studies, educational leadership, and psychometrics, and reliability assessment through a pilot test with 20 administrators/faculty not in the main study. Cronbach's alpha scores ranged from .78 to .84, indicating reliability.
- **Scoring and Interpretation:** A 5-point scale was used for knowledge (1=Very Low, 5=Very High) , attitude (1=Not favorable, 5=Very favorable) , and practices (1=Not practiced, 5=Highly practiced).
- **Data Gathering Procedure:** Approval was obtained from SUC presidents. Formal letters explaining the study's purpose and voluntary nature were distributed with questionnaires. The researcher personally distributed and collected questionnaires, offering clarifications. Confidentiality and anonymity were assured. Data were then organized, tallied, and analyzed with a statistician.
- **Statistical Treatment:** Weighted mean was used for levels of knowledge, attitudes, and practices. Pearson correlation was used to determine relationships between knowledge, attitudes, and practices. A margin of error of 0.05 was assumed for hypothesis testing using SPSS 19.

Results and Discussion:

- **Knowledge:** Both administrators and faculty had "High" knowledge of legal compliance, with administrators higher (3.85 vs. 3.51). Lower scores were noted for legal processes for discrimination and consequences of non-compliance. Knowledge of gender concepts was "High" overall (3.60), but administrators (3.94) scored significantly higher than faculty (3.26). Understanding social constructs of gender was a weakness for both. Institutional responsibilities showed "High" knowledge for both, with administrators higher (3.99 vs. 3.56). Gaps were found in faculty familiarity with broader organizational mandates and available GAD resources.
- **Attitudes:** Administrators showed a "Favorable" overall attitude (4.14) towards gender inclusivity, higher than faculty (3.66). Strong commitment to equal representation in decision-making was observed among administrators. Perception of GAD compliance was "Very Favorable" for administrators (4.21) and "Favorable" for faculty (3.68). Administrators strongly believed GAD policies encourage fair treatment and are beneficial. Faculty recognized GAD as necessary

for institutional responsibilities and reputation but showed "Moderately Favorable" views on its benefits and alignment with institutional values. Support for gender-sensitive leadership was "Favorable" for both, with administrators higher (4.05 vs. 3.63). Administrators strongly associated it with improved staff morale and proactive issue addressing, but were less enthusiastic about leadership training programs. Faculty had "Moderately Favorable" views on training and policies for gender-sensitive leaders. Bias and stereotype awareness was "Favorable" for both (3.96 administrators, 3.68 faculty). Administrators recognized systemic consequences of bias, but were less reflective about personal biases. Faculty also showed less awareness on bias in hiring and interpersonal interactions.

- **Practices:** Gender-sensitive practices in school management and decision-making were perceived as "Practiced" by administrators (4.01) and faculty (3.50). Administrators emphasized consulting diverse voices and gender balance in leadership. Transparency in policies and action plans for gender equity were areas needing more formality. Faculty perceived procedural fairness and complaints mechanisms but saw less practice in policy formulation and leadership inclusion. Infrastructure and resource allocation practices were "Practiced" by both (3.91 administrators, 3.83 faculty). Equal access to resources and inclusive campus facilities were highly rated. Gender-neutral restrooms and planned infrastructure improvements for inclusivity were areas for improvement. Pedagogical practices and student engagement were "Practiced" by administrators (4.06) but "Moderately Practiced" by faculty (3.35). Administrators supported student education on gender sensitivity and equal participation. Faculty noted institutional events but perceived less integration of gender-fair instructional materials, curriculum content, and training on bias recognition in the classroom.

- **Relationship between Knowledge and Attitudes:** Legal compliance knowledge significantly correlated with perception of GAD compliance and support for gender-sensitive leadership, but not with valuing gender inclusivity or bias awareness. Gender concepts and frameworks significantly correlated with perception of GAD compliance and support for gender-sensitive leadership. Institutional responsibility knowledge significantly correlated with valuing gender inclusivity and perception of GAD compliance. No significant relationship was found between any knowledge domain and bias and stereotype awareness.

- **Relationship between Knowledge and Practices:** Legal compliance was significantly correlated only with pedagogical practices and student engagement. Knowledge of gender concepts and frameworks showed significant positive correlations across all three practice domains (school management, infrastructure, pedagogy). Institutional responsibility knowledge correlated significantly with school management and pedagogical practices, but not with infrastructure and resource allocation.

- **Relationship between Attitudes and Practices:** All attitude dimensions showed significant positive correlations with school management and decision-making practices. Strongest correlations were with support for gender-sensitive leadership and valuing gender inclusivity. No significant correlations were found between any attitude dimension and infrastructure and resource allocation practices. All attitude dimensions were significantly correlated with pedagogical practices and student engagement, with the highest correlation found with perception of GAD compliance.

Summary, Conclusion, and Implications, and Recommendations:

- **Summary:** Administrators have generally high knowledge of gender-sensitive practices, policies, and legal mandates, but uneven understanding of procedural applications and applying frameworks to institutional policies. Attitudes are consistently favorable, particularly in valuing inclusivity and perceiving GAD compliance as essential. Practices are reported as high in school management, but faculty perceptions show moderate implementation, especially in transparency and policy development. Infrastructure, gender-neutral restrooms, and gender-sensitive designs need improvement. Pedagogical practices and student engagement are highly practiced by administrators, but faculty perceive less consistent application, especially in gender-fair materials, curriculum, and bias training. Significant correlations were found between knowledge and attitudes (especially GAD compliance and gender-sensitive leadership) and between knowledge and practices (gender concepts, institutional responsibilities, and pedagogy). Attitudes are significantly linked to management and pedagogy practices. These findings form the basis for the GAD-compliant academic leadership framework.

- **Conclusion and Implications:** School administrators have high knowledge of gender-sensitive practices, but procedural understanding is uneven, suggesting theoretical knowledge often exists in isolation from practical application. Attitudes are consistently favorable, with GAD seen as enhancing institutional credibility, but self-awareness of personal biases remains moderate. Gender-sensitive practices are reported, but a gap exists between administrator and faculty perceptions, implying uneven translation of policy into daily practice. Significant relationships exist between knowledge and attitudes (informing behavior and shaping beliefs) , and knowledge and practices (technical knowledge as an enabler). Attitudes are linked to management and pedagogy practices, but not to infrastructure, which is influenced more by systemic constraints. A GAD-Compliant Academic Leadership Framework is proposed, integrating cognitive, affective, and structural elements for multidimensional transformation.
- **Theory Evolved:** The study developed the "Transformative Gender-Sensitive Academic Leadership Theory," which posits that fostering gender sensitivity requires a transformative approach embedding gender equity in leadership knowledge, values, and institutional behavior, beyond mere compliance. This theory emphasizes the dynamic interplay of comprehensive gender knowledge, progressive gender attitudes, and active gender-sensitive practices, which must reinforce each other. Empirical findings support this interdependence. The theory moves from compliance-oriented to proactive, change-driven leadership, where leaders embody gender justice, challenge biases, and institutionalize inclusive systems. It redefines effective academic leadership by emphasizing responsiveness to social equity and integrating gender-sensitivity into all institutional aspects.

Recommendations:

- School administrators should engage in sustained professional development beyond legal compliance, focusing on practical applications of gender frameworks and mainstreaming gender sensitivity.
- CHED and GAD Focal Point Systems should standardize comprehensive gender sensitivity training programs, including modules on unconscious bias, inclusive decision-making, and gender-responsive governance.
- University presidents and campus directors must institutionalize inclusive and participatory decision-making structures that amplify underrepresented voices.
- Faculty development offices should conduct discipline-specific workshops on gender-sensitive pedagogy.
- SUC administrators and planning committees should prioritize reviewing and redesigning infrastructure and facilities to reflect gender-sensitive principles (e.g., gender-neutral restrooms, lactation spaces).
- GAD committees and focal persons must establish clear mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating GAD policy implementation using evidence-based tools.
- The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and SUC budget officers should earmark dedicated funding for GAD-compliant initiatives.
- Future researchers should explore the impact of gender-sensitive leadership on student academic outcomes and faculty performance.
- Comparative studies across regions or HEI types are encouraged to examine contextual influences on gender sensitivity in academic leadership.
- SUC Presidents and Campus Directors should ensure strict implementation and strategic utilization of the mandated 5% GAD budget, aligning expenditures with identified needs and ensuring transparency.

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